

## **One in Christ**

**Sermon Text:** Ephesians 2:11-22

**Study Text:** Philippians 2:12-18

**Sermon Recap:** In this portion of Ephesians, Paul continues to develop the idea that we are together as the Church *in Christ*. This is the foundation and bedrock of genuine gospel community. In these verses, Paul outlines for us what was true before our salvation: that we were strangers and aliens to the commonwealth of God's covenant promises. He tells us what happened in the process of our salvation: that Christ abolished the Law and commandments by standing in our place and taking on our sin, taking it to the cross, dying, and rising from the dead. And Paul tells us what is true now because of our salvation: We are in perfect fellowship with God and the saints of the household of God; in other words, we have been given good and right fellowship with the Church through the gospel. We should, therefore, have this mind and heart concerning our fellow church members: "We are each other's, both now and forever."

**Sermon Connection:** In Philippians 2:12-18, we follow along with Paul's argument from last week. In Phil. 2:1-11, Paul developed the idea of being *in Christ*, and now, he goes on to apply this idea more specifically to gospel community. We must keep in mind that Philippians is a letter to the community of saints, and therefore must be read in that communal context. Paul says to "...*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...*," and to "*Do all things without grumbling or disputing...*," and other such things. These are statements of encouragement and promise for the community of God. Paul is explaining how our being *in Christ* binds us *to* one another and cultivates a deep and abiding love *for* one another.

### **Lesson Plan**

**Lesson Goal:** To see that true gospel community is found in "**one-anothering**." By one-anothering, we mean discipleship and love among the members of the Church of God

#### **Lesson Points:**

**Point 1: Working Out Our Salvation** (vv. 12-13)

**Point 2: The Fruit of Matured Salvation** (vv. 14-18)

**The Context:** In this portion of Paul's letter to the Philippians, having just explained the great humility of Jesus for the sake of the Church, Paul now seeks to apply it to the life of the Church. He desires that we see Christ, not only as our Savior, but also as our great example. He states in 2:5, "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...*" And having explained what that mindset is, he now applies it.

**Point 1 - Working Out Our Salvation** (vv. 12-13)

- Paul's words in v. 12 remind us that he is writing a letter, and he is not currently with the Philippian church. What should his willingness to write a letter to these people who are no longer physically in his life teach us about discipleship and true community life?
- In the original Greek, the word "you" in v. 12 is a 2nd person plural and more appropriately reads "you all." How does this change the meaning and understanding of the command, "...*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...*"?
- What implications does this understanding of "you all" hold for gospel community?
- Read v. 13 and then re-read 2:5-11 from last week. How does v. 13 help further our understanding of being *in Christ together*?

**Point 2 - The Fruit of Mature Salvation** (vv. 14-18)

- What does Paul mean saying, "*Do all things without grumbling or disputing...*"?
- What implications does the command to "*Do all things without grumbling or disputing*" hold for our behavior and attitude in God's gospel community?
- How does being *in Christ together* bring a higher calling to such commands?
- What is the fruit of mature salvation according to v. 16? How does gospel community factor into this?

**Group Reflection/Activity - The unity of our Growth Group is Our Work**

- Have someone in the group read Romans 15:5-7.
- Take some time to work through these questions and encourage open and honest dialogue.

Ownership defined: "To own an ideology, vision, or mission is to take possession of it, to make it your own. It is to internalize it to the point where not only can you reiterate it, but also you can teach it, defend it, and live it."<sup>1</sup>

- How have we/you owned the mission of God and the growth group?
- How have we/you neglected the mission or changed it to suit your own desires?
- What difference does renting vs. owning make in how we treat things?
  - In what ways are we guilty of "renting" the mission of God?

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<sup>1</sup> Brad House, *Community*, 69.

“Our churches are filled with people who agree with the mission [of God] but do not own it...Ownership looks like people participating in the messiness of community and being inconvenienced for the sake of another’s satisfaction.”<sup>2</sup>

- How can we encourage one another to own the mission of God in our lives and in our growth group?
- How is participating in the messiness of gospel community a carrying out/fulfillment of the mission of God?
- What three things can we start doing this week as a growth group to respond to God’s call to own His mission?

### **Intentional Prayer for Unity within Growth Group**

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would begin helping you and your growth group prepare for Sunday worship, for growth group, and for loving and serving others throughout the week.
- Pray that God would grant you to live in peace and harmony with your brothers and sisters in Christ in order that you might glorify God.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would help your growth group learn to lean on each other for discipleship and “one-anothering.”
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would cultivate in your heart, and those of your brothers and sisters, a deep love for one another.
- Pray that God would, *together* with those in your growth group, lead you to take up and own His mission of making disciples.

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<sup>2</sup> House, 73.